

HELPFUL WORDS

FOR THE

NEWLY-CONFIRMED

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THIS CERTIFIES

That

*having been duly instructed in the doctrines of the
CHRISTIAN RELIGION, as confessed by the
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH,
and having professed faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,*

and received obedience to His Gospel, was received
into full Communion, with
by the solemn rite of

CONFIRMATION.

on the _____ day of _____ A.D. 18 _____

Pastor: _____

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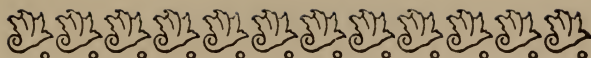
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HELPFUL WORDS

FOR THE

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MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND:

You have just been admitted to full membership in the Church by the solemn rite of Confirmation. For several months previous to this you attended a course of Catechetical instruction. Your pastor expounded to you the great truths of salvation, as well as those doctrines which are distinctive to our Lutheran Church. He explained the Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Sacra-

ments, and emphasized the necessity of repentance, of faith in our Saviour and of holy living. Influenced by a sense of duty to publicly acknowledge Christ and unite yourself with God's people, you appeared before the congregation, and, like Timothy, professing a good profession before many witnesses, you confessed your faith and vowed obedience to the Saviour to the end of life.

YOU ARE TO BE CONGRATULATED

upon the step you have taken. The Church rejoices over your coming and is glad to number you among its communicant members. The Church, like the angels in heaven, rejoices over one sinner that repenteth. There is also much meaning in what you have done. You have openly before the world taken your stand on the side of Christ and will henceforth be enrolled among His avowed friends. Moreover, your example will tell for Christ and the Church, and you may unconsciously

be the means of influencing others to a like decision.

You believe that you are a child of God, that your sins are forgiven through the atoning merits of Jesus Christ, that the Holy Spirit is abiding in you and renewing you day by day, and in reliance upon divine help you have resolved to lead a christian life and to faithfully discharge the obligations which spring out of the new relation into which you have so recently entered. No doubt you are sincere in your resolution and determined to stand by it to the end. But although sincere and in great earnest in this matter you are nevertheless young in the christian life, just a beginner, and in need of additional advice and admonition. You are as a little child just learning to walk: you need a gentle hand to guide your tottering steps in the narrow way, and a loving voice to encourage you to persevere in your efforts. It is for this reason that the following brief words are addressed to you,

and the hope is indulged that they may be of real service to you in your endeavors to lead a christian life and be a useful member of the church to which you belong.

It is a common mistake of

BEGINNERS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

to believe that all is finished and nothing more remains for them to do when they have united with the Church and received their first communion. This is not only a mistake but a mischievous error, and one that is fraught with dire consequences. If such a thought has entered your mind discard it at once. Instead of finished, your work has but just begun. You have only taken the first open step in the active religious life. That life still lies before you. Whether you will succeed in your undertaking and come off victorious depends largely under God upon the measure of fidelity with which you meet the duties and requirements which are the conditions of success and victory!

One plain duty essential to a true christian life is

THE DAILY READING OF YOUR BIBLE.

You have a Bible. Perhaps it is a mother's Bible or a gift from a valued friend. Perhaps you have been reading it all along with some degree of regularity. If not, begin at once. Let not a day pass without reading a portion of it. Go to it as eagerly as the thirsty traveler goes to the cooling spring and drink of its life giving waters. A wonderful book is the Bible. It is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. It has strength for the weary, courage for the disheartened and joy for the sorrowing. No one can read it without being the better for it and being helped by it. It is rightly called God's Word. It is the Word of God; in it God speaks to us, reveals His will, makes known His purposes and discloses His infinite love and mercy. In it we may read again and again the story of the Saviour's

coming, of His death on the cross, and of His willingness to save all who come to Him. If you have doubts God's Word will remove them; if you are in difficulties it will clear them away; if you are in trials it will show you the way out, or else how to bear them; if at any time you feel your sins pressing upon you it will point you to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Oh! neglect not the reading of your Bible. The more you read it the more you will love it, and the sweeter it will become to you. Another requirement is

DAILY PRAYER.

Your Catechism has taught you the meaning of prayer and how to pray. I would urge upon you the duty of daily prayer. The day should begin and end with prayer. In the morning you should pray for God's guidance and direction, and in the evening for His forgiveness and protection; in the morning praise for the rest and safety of the night, in the

evening for the help and deliverance during the day. He who begins the day with prayer begins the day with the battle half won, and he who ends the day in prayer will end it victoriously. Oh! the value of that prayer which none but God sees and hears. In such prayer we renew our strength and gather our weapons for life's conflicts; at such times the individual soul receives courage to face temptations and wisdom to foil the tempter's power. It is the place where unknown to the great world we may pour into Jesus' ear the story of our troubles and sins and failures and defeats, where we may utter the secret longings of our hearts and our yearnings for purity and holiness. If you would succeed in your christian life and grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, be often in secret prayer.

REGULAR ATTENDANCE UPON DIVINE WORSHIP is another essential. The Church is God's house. God's people meet there for united

worship. There is much inspiration and help in worshipping with your fellow christians. God meets His people whenever they come to His house and blesses them. He has filled His house with rich gifts and treasures for you. His servant, your pastor, is there to give you God's message. That message is designed to instruct you, to refresh and fortify you. The Church is the wayside inn where you may enter to rest and invigorate yourself for the journey of life. If you are absent but once you will miss much, you may miss the very things you require for your spiritual welfare. The pastor may have a word in his sermon just suited to you, and you will not get it. You cannot be a christian and neglect your church.

Be careful then about your church attendance. Never stay away if you can possibly be there. Guard against missing the first service; if you miss one it will be easier to miss the second. Be in your pew every Lord's day

if at all possible. The same is true in regard to the week-day services of the church. Make no worldly engagement that will interfere with attendance upon them. You need the benefits which these services confer and will be poor without them. Moreover, avoid becoming intimate with young people of other churches, for they may entice you on the score of friendship to go with them to their services, and thus you will lay the foundation for neglecting your own place of worship. Friendship is often a source of sweetest and purest joys, but do not forsake your own and wander off to some other church for the sake of friendship. In like manner shun intimacy with those who are not members of any church. There is danger that their influence over you may be stronger than yours over them, and so your spiritual interests will be imperiled. To preserve your piety and to keep you safe, go to church with all regularity, go to the prayer-meetings, but above all go to the

LORD'S TABLE.

The holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper was instituted by the Saviour for his followers. In it He gives Himself to the faithful communicant. He who partakes of the communion worthily receives the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. It also exhibits and emphasizes the wonderful love of the Saviour, a love that brought Him from heaven to earth, that constrained Him to undergo the woes and sorrows of life, and that finally led Him to Calvary. The believing disciple will have his heart filled with joy and peace, and be made strong for duty and sacrifice, whenever he communes at the table of his Lord.

It is your duty to be at the communion whenever it is observed. You should be there if at all possible. You should permit nothing to interfere. You should not even consult your own feelings and inclinations. You should make no engagements to be elsewhere on communion day. Even a sense of unfitness

and unworthiness must not deter you from coming; on the contrary, this should be an incentive to urge you thither. If you have sinned and done wrong, repent of these things and come; if you have wandered in forbidden paths, return; if you have grown cold in your zeal and love, seek to rekindle them at the Lord's table. You will gain nothing by remaining away; indeed, you will lose everything. Be there, for it is your solemn duty.

But duty is a cold word. You should esteem it a blessed privilege thus to confess your Lord at His table. You ought not to find it in your heart to remain away from this feast of love, so sweet and so precious, and thus deprive yourself of the comfort and hope which are imparted there.

WORKING IN AND FOR THE CHURCH.

To do something in the Church, to do something for the Church, to do something for Christ and his cause—this will be a great

help to you in your christian life. The Church needs workers, needs members who are willing to serve it. The amount of work to be done is great, and of such endless variety as to make it possible for every one to find something that is suited to his ability.

The daily reading of the Bible, secret prayer and attendance upon the worship and ordinances of God's house, are all means of grace designed to develop and strengthen Christian character and promote piety. But this is not all. The Psalmist says: "Wait on the Lord and He shall strengthen thy heart." To what purpose is this strength which is gained by waiting on the Lord in His appointed way? What is to be done with it? Is it to be dissipated by idleness or neglect? Surely, there is but one answer to these inquiries: It is to be expended in service for Him, in honest, cheerful toil in His Church. The Lord has no room for idlers and drones in His kingdom. The command of the Master still is, "Go work to-day in my vineyard."

You should be ambitious then to be more than a mere ornament in the church to which you belong ; you should not be satisfied with mere church membership and holy living ; you should aim to be an active, working disciple of Jesus. Be ready to respond to the call for workers, put your spiritual strength into exercise. Your pastor will be only too glad to assign you some task. Go to work, use your gifts for God's glory, be a blessing to your church. And finally, do not neglect the privilege of

GIVING TO YOUR CHURCH.

A religion that costs nothing is too cheap to last long. God's work calls directly for help, pecuniary help. Your own Church, the cause of Missions and Education, all these must be supported by the voluntary gifts of christians. If you would preserve your interest in Religion, in your Church, give, give all you can, make it a conscientious duty to give. The

liberal soul shall grow fat. May God bless
you and make you an honored and useful
member of His Church, is the prayer of
YOUR PASTOR.



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